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In 2017, the foreign and defence ministers of almost all EU countries decided to establish a Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) for European Union defence policy. The debates at think tanks in EU Member States about this initiative show that expectations regarding a European defence architecture diverge widely and focus on very different issues. This is especially true for Poland and France. In Poland, European defence policy is primarily understood as a form of collective defence against Russia which needs to be integrated into the NATO framework. For France, on the other hand, risks to its very own security and that of Europe come primarily from its southern neighbours. This is why Paris attaches particular importance to the development of military intervention capabilities. These differing preferences of Germany's two largest and most important neighbouring countries are reflected clearly in the scientific analyses and comments by European think tanks on questions of European armaments policy and the further integration of European defence policy.

A look at the debates in European think tank publications on the Common Defence and Security Policy (CDSP) reveals that the preferences of EU Member States in this policy area vary widely. The differences become particularly visible when the benefits of the new Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which 25 EU Member States signed up to in 2017, are discussed in the field of security and defence. Within the framework of PESCO, the participating states should, among other things, "develop jointly defence capabilities, [...] enhance the operational readiness and contribution of their armed forces", as stated in the EU's official statement (note: scientific classifications of PESCO and comments on this initiative can be found in the list of Publications Reviewed and in Further Reading at the end of this Journal Review). The differences in PESCO's assessment are particularly evident if one looks at a selection of think tank publications published since 2017 that mainly focus on the attitudes of France and Poland towards this process. In particular, many analyses come from these two — but also other — countries refer directly to the divergent defence policy interests of the other EU member.

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The aim of this Journal Review is to compare the different problem perceptions, interests and policy recommendations in publications with regard to Poland and France, and to classify them into the European discourse on defence policy. The publications examined here were selected according to two criteria: Firstly, analyses and comments written by researchers from French and Polish think tanks were chosen and complemented by publications from think tankers from other EU Member States in order to include an internal and external perspective on the debates taking place. Secondly, publications were included that looked into the new developments in European defence policy that have occurred since 2017. These include publicly available policy briefs, analyses and comments. The following sections on discussions relating to Poland and France also address EU institutional factors and integration aspects, as well as their defence and armaments dimensions. Most of the articles discussed here have dealt with these broader issues.

Poland: The NATO Alliance as a First Priority

The Polish debate reveals a distanced relationship to an increasingly integrated EU defence policy.

Justyna Gotkowska of the Polish Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) could not find almost any helpful approaches in recent EU defence policy initiatives, such as PESCO, that might actually further advance the European integration process. She concludes that PESCO is not an appropriate EU response to new global and regional challenges in security policy, as PESCO contains the unsolved strategic contradiction between the preferences of Germany and those of France. While Berlin pursues an inclusive and integrative policy approach to defence issues, France's priorities are more in favour of an exclusive and militarily effective EU defence policy. If expectations of PESCO to promote integration do not materialise, the likely result is further European fragmentation in this policy area. According to Gotkowska, the differences in the strategic culture of EU Member States could even widen, in particular between key players within the Union, including France, Germany and Poland. While Paris localises threats to its own and European security interests in North Africa, Warsaw focuses on securing Europe's eastern flank, which extends from the Baltic Sea through Poland to Romania. The author diagnoses an over-focusing on PESCO and an EU tiptoeing away from the transatlantic alliance. She suggests that this development weakens the credibility of NATO's military deterrence from Russia and, thus, poses a threat to Poland's security interests. For example, the debate that often takes place among European experts about US *disengagement* from Europe and NATO structures, which is based primarily on the rhetoric of US President Trump, is in fact misleading. Only this talk of a potential US departure, which would require an intensified European defence policy on the part of Western EU Member States, could possibly trigger an *actual* withdrawal of the US from Europe. This discourse has, therefore, been met with great scepticism — not only in Poland, but also in the states along NATO's eastern flank and in the remaining Visegrád Group countries (V4): the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

Marcin Terlikowski of the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) looks more positively at European security and defence policy. He emphasises the political importance of PESCO but, at the same time, criticises tendencies of exclusion of the states of Central and Eastern Europe with weaker defence industries. As a result, he writes, European security and defence policy risks becoming an elitist, Western European project. He recommends that Warsaw instead focus on transatlantic relations and NATO as well as on closing Europe's military capacity gaps by participating in PESCO projects. For Poland, it is of fundamental strategic importance to avoid duplicating EU and NATO structures and that PESCO remains inclusive and binding

at the same time. Warsaw should, therefore, press for PESCO projects to be closely coordinated with NATO planning processes and make use of the opportunities which certain PESCO projects might offer, such as improving military mobility. These plans coincide with NATO's complementary goal of strengthening Poland's territorial and alliance defence capabilities.

In a publication for the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), **Marcin Zaborowski** highlights Polish interests on armaments and defence issues. Zaborowski identifies a number of problems confronting Warsaw that counteract deepening European integration in this area: Former Polish governments, and also the current one, have relied almost exclusively on the US and the US defence industry to equip their country's armed forces since the end of the Cold War. This would explain the lack of integration in the Polish defence industry compared to other European countries. However, he writes that this should be viewed in an increasingly problematic environment in which the European security architecture is facing major challenges stemming from aggressive Russian foreign policy, an unstable alliance with the US and a fast-approaching Brexit. Zaborowski also sees the Polish defence sector as increasingly in need of structural reform, since it is predominantly state-owned and grappling with major efficiency and cost issues. He suggests that these deficits are exacerbated by Warsaw's lack of a long-term strategy on armaments issues. Its unquestioned preference for US defence providers too often actually undermines Polish interests, as there has been no knowledge transfer from which Polish industry could have benefitted from over the long term. Also, the Polish government has so far generally awarded its arms contracts without considering issues of compatibility with other EU partners. This also isolates Poland within its preferred regional framework, the V4 group, whose other member states have already benefitted from a diversified European arms market in many ways. If, however, Warsaw were to become more amenable to trading on the European arms market, this could represent a risk to its state-dominated domestic defence industry. Nevertheless, Zaborowski argues that the Polish government must recognise and exploit opportunities for deeper European defence integration. He suggests that a greater commitment to European defence policy could benefit Poland to a further extent given that the EU is currently very critical of Warsaw in other areas of politics, notably the rule of law and intra-European solidarity.

Karolina Muti of the Italian Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), also identifies Poland as the missing link in a European defence and armaments structure. Muti asserts that Warsaw primarily sees itself as a loyal transatlantic partner, giving full priority to its relations with the US as a protecting power and to the US defence industry. Muti perceives the US's growing unreliability as particularly problematic and believes Warsaw should respond with a clear policy of rapprochement with the EU and its Member States. Poland will not only benefit materially and financially from effective and substantial participation in the different PESCO projects, but will also be able to increase political credibility at EU level. Warsaw would then be able to take on the promising role of acting like a bridge between the different strategic interests of Western and Eastern Europe. Realigning its focus on EU partners would also give Poland the opportunity to modernise its military resources (industry and armaments). Although Muti accepts the fear expressed by many in Poland that initiatives such as PESCO could lead to the undesired duplication of structures that already exist within NATO, she believes that the risk of this happening could be averted if Warsaw were to embrace a policy of broad and active participation.

France: Reform Ambitions inside and outside the EU Framework

Analyses of think tanks looking at France's preferences and perceptions on defence and armaments policy primarily deal with Presi-

dent Emmanuel Macron, who has been in power since 2017, and his lofty ambitions for European policy reform. However, in doing so, they come across some contradictions they outline in their research publications.

In his contribution to an anthology by the Institut de Recherche Stratégique et de l'École Militaire (IRSEM) in Paris, **Pierre Haroche** highlights the "geostrategic dilemma" he believes EU Member States face. The dominant threat perceptions in Poland are thoroughly incompatible with those of France. He writes that Poland is spellbound by fears of Russia on the eastern European flank, whereas France is turning its full gaze to Europe's southern flank because it fears increasing migration pressure from Africa. The two countries not only define their national security interests differently, but also have completely different defence policies as a result. According to Haroche, other factors that add to the divergence in security interests between Poland and France and have a lasting impact on the European defence debate include the election of Donald Trump, stricter fiscal discipline in the EU since the financial and government debt crises, threats from terrorism, the migration crisis, Russia's aggressive self-assertion on the international stage and the impending withdrawal of the UK from the EU. But Haroche views the complexity of current security risks as an opportunity for progress on European defence policy and further suggests that it represents a good basis for PESCO to act as an integrative element. The European geostrategic dilemma could be resolved if the divergent interests were to be evened out and the different priorities mutually recognised, i.e. if the EU states were to achieve a 'transactional solidarity'. He suggests that the conditions for achieving this were also present at the military level where different capabilities were required for crisis operations in the South and for NATO's military presence in the East. As a result, France and Poland, although at opposite ends of the defence policy spectrum, could act as a counterbalance on European conflicts of interest and assume leadership roles to successfully manage the balancing act between remaining loyal to NATO, their own national priorities and the sometimes conflicting priorities at the European level.

Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Fondation Robert Schuman, commented on the high expectations in Parisian defence and security policy circles for a *"powerful Europe"* in a policy paper published by the research institute in May 2018. However, those striving for such a Europe should not only look at EU structures, but also at decidedly military formats outside EU institutions. Giuliani sees the establishment of PESCO as an, albeit late, *"awakening"* of Europe. Franco-German relations, to which Giuliani attaches great importance in his comments, are vital for forthcoming developments in the field of European defence policy. However, as the author goes on to point out, compromises enforced by Germany because of its preference for PESCO to be as inclusive and integrative as possible have prompted the French to look for defence cooperation projects outside EU structures as well, one of which is the European Intervention Initiative (EI2), announced by Macron in his Sorbonne speech in September 2017. The EI2 enabled France to better represent its security interests in the southern neighbourhood. According to Giuliani, the EI2 format will also make it possible to further integrate the UK into a European security architecture — even after Brexit. However, the different perceptions of the security situation and the disparate strategic orientation of foreign and security policy among the EU Member States remain a key issue. The realisation of a common "strategic culture" in Europe, which is indispensable for France, would thus be made even more difficult.

Barbara Kunz from the Institut Français des Relations Internationales (ifri) in Paris expresses her mixed expectations of European defence policy in an article for the German Marshall Fund (GMF). Like Haroche and Giuliani, she too paints a picture of a European defence policy in crisis having to

assert itself against a background of the US under Trump, looming Brexit and the migration debate. Kunz mentions three factors that could cause the required German and French engines of change to 'stall': the East-South debate, the debate on Europe's strategic autonomy and the state of transatlantic relations. She argues that Germany and France are pursuing different priorities in all areas, despite having a similar assessment of the situation. France would not shy away from unilateral action, if no option for action at the European level was available. However, Paris usually tries afterwards to embed its approach in multilateral European formats. The German method is less targeted and strategically unambitious, as Kunz asserts. However, this approach is usually met with incomprehension and irritation from the French side. But, ultimately, Kunz continues, the two driving forces in the EU need to agree on a bilateral level in order to avoid further divergence within the Union. At the same time, however, there is a need for more intensive and expanded strategic discussion on how to deal with NATO and other formats outside EU structures (including the EI2) and how their respective national interests and priorities could be recognised to ensure that PESCO can be jointly implemented for long-term success.

In a policy brief also published by the GMF, **Alice Pannier** assigns France the important position of a mediator. She writes that it is up to France to strengthen its strong security and defence links with the UK in the future European security architecture after Brexit. In addition, Paris must prioritise EU initiatives in this area over other unilateral and bilateral projects, since this is the only way for the EU to develop and pursue a coherent and consistent approach. According to Pannier, the area of tension in which France finds itself is determined not only by relations with NATO, ad hoc intervention formats and PESCO, but also by the close bilateral and, therefore, potentially risky arms cooperation with the UK. On a strategic level, there may be greater convergence with London than with (most) other European partners. However, the integration and institutionalisation of European defence (and arms) policy would be a more attractive option for Paris if it wanted to throw more political capital behind its own interests and be awarded a greater leadership role on European defence issues in the future. But, to do so, France would have to refrain from making unilateral (ad hoc) decisions on defence issues.

Conclusion

In summary, it can be stated that the observations on the future of European defence policy contained in the above think tank publications, which focus on Poland and France, vary considerably. This also applies generally to those observations concerned with the general challenges and potential structural changes of EU defence policy. That the European defence debate is simultaneously shaped by domestic, integration and security policy issues, makes it difficult for researchers to analyse the complex motivations and options for action of EU Member States participating in PESCO. However, a review of the above publications also shows that portrayals of today's most pressing problems and crises are largely the same.

The analysis of the prevailing discourse in Poland makes it clear that the debates in the Eastern and Central European EU Member States differ greatly from those in Western Europe, drawing on the example of France in this case. The Polish assessment of joint defence efforts is more critical and detached — an observation that applies to all the articles discussed. This scepticism is prevalent despite Warsaw benefitting politically from the new initiatives in many ways, both at national and European level. Despite these reservations, the Polish government announced at the end of 2018 that it intended to participate in the second round of PESCO projects, albeit only to a limited extent. Terlikowski and Muti, in particular, have pointed out that the implementation of PESCO gives Poland the oppor-

tunity to assume the role of an important mediator, acting, on the one hand, between Western and Eastern EU Member States and, on the other hand, as an advocate of meaningful complementarity between EU and NATO requirements — with Warsaw certainly advocating the primacy of the latter.

All the authors cited here, who have looked at France's defence interests, agree that Paris would be well advised to act in a less isolated manner and instead seek a joint approach with Germany and Poland, in order to make PESCO a successful project. However, this presupposes a common strategy across the EU which would have to reflect a balance between all of Europe's overarching geostrategic interests. As the above articles have made clear, the French government has a number of options available to shape its defence policy. It can choose between bilateral agreements on arms projects as well as political and military cooperation formats. Paris has revealed its preference for bilateral and ad hoc formats that do not necessarily have to be part of the EU framework. This could open up new opportunities to integrate the UK into a future European security and defence architecture, an aspect most writers include in their observations in the run-up to Brexit slated for 29 March 2019.

Summarising the analyses and comments discussed, France sees itself as a driving force in the development of a European defence policy, but is not afraid to potentially irritate other Member States with its discourse on strategic autonomy of the EU and the EI2 initiative it has promoted.

These presented analyses of France's motives and Poland's criticism and ambivalent behaviour on matters of European defence policy should be carefully noted in Berlin. Germany should be looking to take charge of the task of balancing the diverging geostrategic interests between the East and the West of the EU, thereby bringing its own interests into the debate. In other words, Berlin should increasingly take on the role of mediator itself. However, Germany will have to reckon with criticism from France and Poland if it takes on this function (see analyses by Gotkowska and Kunz), because its neighbours to the east and west have repeatedly said they consider the Bundeswehr's resources inadequate and Germany's reluctance to engage in crisis management casts doubt on the credibility of German promises. It is not only the authors of the articles discussed here who believe Berlin should become more involved in defence issues and, therefore, assume more responsibility. German researchers, such as Major and Mölling (2017, see Further Reading), come to similar conclusions. What this means for PESCO is that, in developing a European "strategic culture", Germany runs the risk of neglecting its own interests if it does not proactively contribute to shaping this defence policy initiative. The absence of a common strategic approach is seen by most authors as problematic for the further development of a pan-European defence policy. Similar views are shared by other European 'think tankers' researching PESCO. In addition to the strategy issue, Blockmans (2018, see Further Reading), for example, sees further challenges for PESCO that policymakers will have to resolve in the near future. These include compelling and binding rules on the implementation of the PESCO framework in and for the participating states, agreeing on ambitious goals whilst maintaining an inclusive and integrative approach, and ensuring PESCO is compatible with other defence structures in Europe. If these issues remain unresolved, the success of PESCO could be in jeopardy, especially if current trends in Warsaw (strong US focus) and Paris (tendency towards unilateral ad hoc formats) intensify. The literature referred to in this Journal Review of the European defence debate not only highlights policy recommendations that directly affect Warsaw and Paris, but also expresses, either implicitly or explicitly, the authors' concrete expectations of Berlin. Against the background of the current policy and research debates, the Federal Government must ultimately ask itself what kind of defence policy does Berlin want for Germany — and also Europe —, and how

might the vision of a 'European Defence Union' and a 'European Army' — both of which still require legal and political underpinning (cf. Wolfstädter 2018, see Further Reading) — still be realised despite the current differences that persist among EU Member States.

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